

SEPTEMBER 2025

MC

proaudio

MORE THAN
MUSIC, A BOND
BEYOND TIME

MICASA

FEATURED ARTISTS

- JEANINE VOLSCHENK
- KEENAN AHREND
- NTSIKI NTSELE

PRO-GEAR

- BLACKSTAR DEBUT BASS
- BLACKSTAR AMPED 2
- SWIFF AUDIO WS-50

We salute the Godfather of Heavy Metal - TONY IOMMI

**SCHOOL
of ROCK**
PARKTOWN NORTH

Gibson

Epiphone

KRAMER
Guitars

STEINBERGER

AKEELAH CHICALIA | MAX MACGARRY | JAKE WOLMAN



**Play it.
Feel it.
Live it.**

SEPTEMBER EDITION OF PROAUDIO **MUSICGEAR** MAGAZINE

Welcome to the September edition of Proaudio MusicGear Magazine.

In this issue we celebrate innovation with features on the Steinberger guitar, whose radical design reshaped guitar history, and the return of Kramer, the brand that defined the shred era of the '80s. We also look at modern essentials like the Swiff Audio WS-50 wireless system, Blackstar's Debut BASS amplifiers, and the Nord Piano 6, exploring how these tools are transforming the way musicians play both live and in the studio.

On the artist side, we share conversations with voices shaping South African and global music. From Jeanine Volschenk's heartfelt authenticity to Keenan Ahrends' jazz explorations, from Ntsiki Ntsele's gospel-rooted piano journey to the timeless energy of Mi Casa and the pioneering vision of Josiah De Disciple—each story reminds us why we make and love music.

With live events like Comic Con bringing young performers such as Max, Jake, and Akeelah to the stage, and established artists reaching new audiences, this issue reflects the full spectrum of our music culture—past, present, and future.

STAY LOUD. STAY INSPIRED.
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Product Library

This magazine is designed to inform, supply, and provide information relating to the industry that we find ourselves in. Some of the material that we have used is resourced from websites around the world to help bring perspective and insight to your business' and your lives. Products highlighted and reviewed may or may not be available, if you have any questions relating to the information herein, please contact us.

Feature Articles

06 More Than Music

For over a decade, Mi CASA has been the heartbeat of South African house and soul, blending jazz, groove, and uplifting energy into songs that never fail to get people moving.

Featured Artists

16 NEVER STOP SINGING - Jeanine Volschenk stands out as a voice that sings straight from the heart.

26 THE EVOLVING SOUND of Keenan Ahrends is a guitarist whose playing carries both depth and subtle fire.

32 The Return of an '80s Shred Legend

Few guitar brands embody the raw energy and excess of the 1980s like Kramer.

64 A New Generation of Guitar Icons

When it comes to guitar innovation, few instruments have made as bold and lasting an impact as the Steinberger.

Cover Group MI CASA



06

Jeanine Volschenk



16

Keenan Ahrends



26

Image Credit: Siphwe Mhlambi

Guitars

12 Les Paul Modern Studio Wine Red Satin

The Gibson Les Paul Modern Studio in Wine Red Satin blends classic Les Paul DNA with contemporary refinements.

22 Les Paul Modern Lite Inverness Green Satin

The Gibson Les Paul Modern Lite in Inverness Green Satin blends classic Les Paul aesthetics with lightweight ergonomics and modern design cues.

36 Assault Figured Magenta Perimeter

The Kramer Assault Figured — Magenta Perimeter is a visually striking single-cut guitar that merges vintage single-cut styling with shred-ready modern construction.

44 Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel

The Epiphone EFCL-EB Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel is a faithful reissue of Epiphone's 1939 classic, designed to capture the vintage character of the original while offering reliable modern performance.

56 George Thorogood "White Fang" ES-125TDC

The Epiphone George Thorogood "White Fang" ES-125TDC is a limited-edition, hollow-body archtop electric guitar built in the spirit of Thorogood's vintage Gibson ES-125.

ARTIST FEATURED

50 Akeelah Chicalia

52 Max Macgarry

54 Jake Wolman

68

Where Gospel Meets Jazz and Soul

NTSIKI NTSELE

Keyboards

74 Taking The Stage with Red Confidence

There are instruments you play in a room, and then there are instruments you take onto a stage and trust with your whole performance.

Pro-Gear

40 Small Aize, Big Sound

When it comes to bass amps, it's not always about shaking the windows or rattling the neighbour's walls.

60 A Whole Rig at Your Feet

Every guitarist dreams of a setup that delivers huge tone, total control, and easy portability.

78 Wireless Freedom

The WS-50 is a compact wireless system designed for guitars and other instruments, and it feels like a breath of fresh air for local musicians.

MI CASA





More Than Music, A Bond Beyond Time



For over a decade, **Mi CASA** has been the heartbeat of South African house and soul, blending jazz, groove, and uplifting energy into songs that never fail to get people moving.

From their breakout hit *Jika* to international collaborations with the likes of Black Coffee and Sauti Soul, the trio—J'Something, Dr. Duda, and Mo-T—have built a legacy defined not just by success, but by the strength of their bond and their purpose.



In this interview, they reflect on the innocence of their beginnings, the challenges of navigating a fast-changing industry, and the joy of creating music that continues to connect people across the world.



You've been together for over a decade, with countless hits and unforgettable performances - what has kept the bond between you as strong as the music itself?



What a journey its been. A committed relationship truly does bear the sweetest fruits.

We could never single out a thing that has kept the bond between us this strong ... if we were forced too it would have to be time ... when you give something you love the time you have it benefits from your attention. Anything you give your attention too will grow and flourish.



Looking back to your early days, what stands out most about the journey from where you started to where you are now?



The innocence of it all. We really just wanted to make music and share it in order to see people smile and connect with self and others. No ambitions really beyond that and although its been a rollercoaster because with success comes a lot of ego flaring moments but we have focused more on our purpose and the role we believe we play in this world instead of focusing on "how amazing we are."



The innocence remains and the purpose behind what we do has only increased in richness since day 1.



How has your creative process as a trio changed over the years, and what does a "Mi Casa studio session" look like today compared to the beginning?



To be honest it actually hasn't changed much. We have our lanes and everyone is really good at what they do so there isn't a need to jump into someone else's lane.

We have for the past few years brought in Teddy who is currently touring with us and is an incredible musician that has been writing with us in studio. We try limit the people in that space.



Every artist faces highs and lows - what's been one of your biggest challenges as a band, and how did you grow from it?

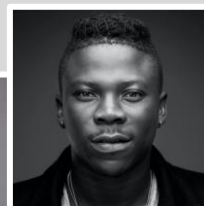


Yeah agreed, every relationship has its challenges. I reckon communication is key to a successful bond and we have maintained a high standard of quality communication when needed ... we have never had an argument in the 14 years we been together.

Challenges I would say have come in the very fast changing industry we are in ... and figuring out when to go with the flow and when not too.

Smart sailors.

Anything you give your attention too will grow and flourish.



Collaboration has always been a part of your story. Which past collab has been the most memorable, and who's still on your dream list?



One that comes to mind is creating Barman with Big Nuz and DJ Tira. That studio session was crazy. Another one that stands out was creating Give Me Love with Stonebwoy ... this song was created in less than 24 hours and we were both in different parts of the world.

Still to come ... we would dig to work with Odeal ... we reckon we could make a dope track together.



Your music is often described as soulful, uplifting, and timeless. Where do you draw that consistent energy and inspiration from?



Humbled and honoured to hear such. We draw from our WHY. This isn't about fame for us but about building community and spaces for us as a community to connect and feel alive, free, happy, and a sense of belonging.



Performing internationally has become a big part of your journey. How do those experiences compare to playing for your South African audience at home?



They so different. Not to be compared. They both have thrill. They both mean so much to us. One comes with the comfort of being home and the other with the thrill of leaving home. they both are such special moments.



MG With exciting shows like the Tribute to Women Festival and the Sunset Music Series ahead, what can fans expect from Mi Casa in this next chapter?



No moment is the same in this life. Each one sacred. Each one able to open up new parts of ourselves more than we know.

Each show we get to be apart of is a moment for us that we cherish beyond words ... We are doing Friendship 2026 which is a big project of ours, you can find more about it on our site <http://micasamusic.com/> ... we working on sharing new music which is always such a moment ... we are craving deeper connections with our people so we have a lot in the pipeline that can hopefully birth that deeper connection between us, after all what is a home without its people.



Gibson

LPSTM002-W

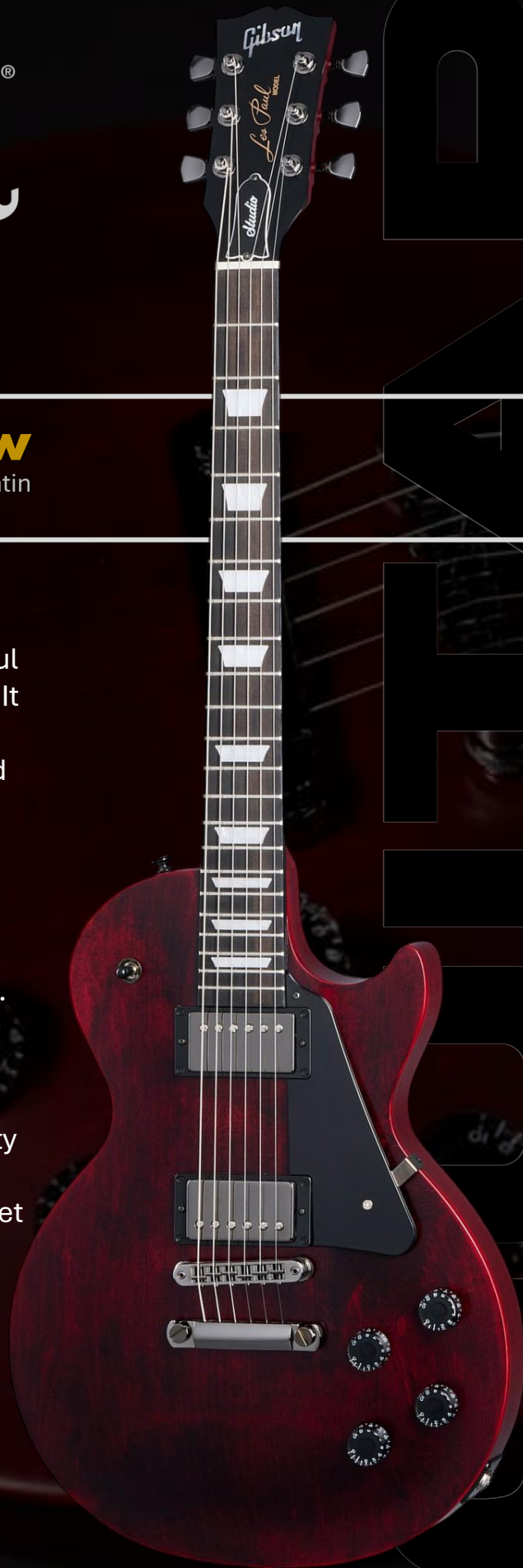
Les Paul Modern Studio Wine Red Satin

The Gibson Les Paul Modern Studio in Wine Red Satin blends classic Les Paul DNA with contemporary refinements. It features an Ultra-Modern weight-relieved mahogany body with a carved maple top, giving it rich resonance without excess weight.

The satin nitrocellulose finish offers a smooth, non-gloss feel that stays comfortable even during long session.

A SlimTaper mahogany neck with a bound ebony fretboard and a 12–16" compound radius enhances playability across the fretboard, while the contoured heel ensures easy upper-fret access.

A Guitarist's Perspective on a Modern Les Paul Workhorse



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

As a guitarist, what makes the Les Paul Modern Studio Wine Red Satin worth picking up is how it feels and responds in your hands. The SlimTaper neck and satin finish make long sets and rehearsals easier—no sticky gloss slowing you down, just smooth playability. The Ultra-Modern weight relief is a big deal too; it cuts down on shoulder fatigue without sacrificing the signature Les Paul resonance.

Then there's the versatility factor. With coil-splitting, phase switching, and pure bypass, you can jump from thick, singing humbucker sustain to crisp single-coil sparkle in seconds. For gigging musicians, that means one guitar can cover an entire setlist of tones without swapping instruments.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

Thanks to its versatile electronics and high-output pickups, this Les Paul Modern Studio shines across genres:

- **Rock / Hard Rock / Metal:** The 498T bridge powerhouse and coil-splitting let you dial in either heavy crunch or brighter tones.
- **Blues / Classic Rock:** The 490R and unique switching options (phase, pure bypass) allow swirly cleans, growling blues, and PAF-like warmth.
- **Funk / Indie / Experimental:** Single-coil-like tones via coil splits and phase combos give funky, percussive punch and quirky bite.
- **Recording / Studio Work:** Pure bypass delivers a clean, uncolored signal for pristine tracking and easy sound manipulation.



“It feels so smooth to hold and play, and with the neck carve you could really shred. I can totally see why someone would prefer a satin finish... I also think it has the strongest, most glorious nitrocellulose smell of any Gibson I’ve held.”

**— A proud new owner of a
Les Paul Modern Studio in
Wine Red**

WHO WOULD USE IT?

Ideal for:

- **Gigging Musicians** who need a lighter Les Paul feel, modern access to upper frets, and tonal flexibility on stage.
- **Session Players** wanting one instrument capable of delivering classic humbucker tones, bright single-coil textures, and uncolored pure bypass signal.
- **Players Transitioning to Les Paul from Other Brands** seeking modern ergonomics (slim neck, satin finish, weight relief) with traditional Les Paul tonal foundations.
- **Versatile Multi-Genre Players** who appreciate one guitar covering blues, rock, funk, and clean-to-dirt transitions quickly via push/pull controls.
- **Experienced Players Seeking Less Flash, More Substance**—it looks sleek without flashy binding, focuses on tone and feel, and includes next-gen features at a solid price.

Never Stop Singing

**The Journey of
Jeanine Volschenk**

Jeanine Volschenk stands out as a voice that sings straight from the heart. Rooted in a strong musical heritage and shaped by her own relentless drive, Jeanine has grown into an artist who blends storytelling with soul, creating music that resonates far beyond her hometown of Potchefstroom.

In this candid conversation, she shares her journey—from early gigs and family influences to her role in the band Self-Direction and her latest collaboration with **Anton Botha**.

What emerges is a portrait of an artist who refuses to compromise on authenticity, determined to keep writing, singing, and creating no matter where life takes her.





For those meeting you for the first time, who is Jeanine Volschenk – both as an artist and as a person?



I love being outdoors and I am sporty. I did horse-riding for years, will easily go for a 21km run on a Saturday morning and I am in the gym almost every morning. I am very kind, honest, strong willed, hard worker and not afraid of confrontation. Once a teacher wrote in my report, “Jeanine works hard and she plays hard”.

I will swim and walk to the ends of the earth for those that I love.

Tend to have a lot of anxiety and always give my best in everything that I do. As an artist. I do not really see the two separately. Who I am definitely comes across to an audience and in my singing. To me music is an endless journey. I am continuously growing and being shaped by music. As an artist I can only be me, trying to be as authentic as possible.



You come from a musically rich family background – how did growing up with a grandmother who was an opera singer and a father who played in bands shape your love for music?



I was exposed to music very early on. Their passion for music was contagious. At four or five years old they discovered I could hold a note and the rest was history.





You started performing at 18 with your own sound system – what were those early gigs like, and how did they influence your style and confidence as a performer?



Those gigs were at weddings, birthdays, restaurants, old age homes and churches. helped me to grow my confidence and to understand and learn my way around the stage. Not sure if I have ever focused on my style but different songs and venues ask different things of you in music and singing.

I tend to adapt well to what is being asked from the venue and to what the music asks of me. Other than that I just sing. I am not sure whether I am always getting it right but to sing with emotion! Emotion, that is important.



You're currently part of a local band in Potchefstroom called Self-Direction. How has being part of this band helped you grow musically, and what makes your live shows special?



Singing with a band is different that singing with backtracks. It pushes me to step out of my comfort zone. It pushes me to bold and not to worry too much about doing everything perfect but to tell the story, be in the moment and to sing with emotion. I am not sure what makes us special, you will have to come and see for yourself.

“What I can tell you is that we all do it because we cannot imagine our lives without music.”



Your new song with Anton Botha, Jy Maak Daardie Dele Stiller, has just been released. How did this collaboration come about?



I wrote the song and sent it to Anton so that he can start with the making of the backtrack for the recording. I told him he is more that welcome to make adjustments as he sees fit. He made wonderful contributions to the song. He changed some of the words, rhythms and even changed some parts of the melody.



The title of the song is powerful - can you share the inspiration or story behind Jy Maak Daardie Dele Stiller and what it means to you personally?



Sometimes people come into your life and they just get you or you get them without even trying. They give and not just take. The parts that hurt, that are empty are suddenly healing and are not that empty anymore. When we truly love someone, should it not be unconditionally?

“In that unconditional love we find healing, acceptance, no judgement and motivation to be an even better person. It is easy to be around a love like that.”

MG You've spoken about your love for writing, producing, and storyboarding music videos - what role does storytelling play in your creative process?



Storytelling helps you to get the message across. It helps to paint a picture of what you are trying to tell. When we say things we expect the other person to be on the same page and to understand what we are saying. However I have experienced how coming from different backgrounds and frameworks individually shapes each person's perspective and unique viewpoints. All the more reason to tell a good story to give a clear meaning and paint a vivid picture of what you are trying to say.

MG Looking ahead, what are your dreams and plans for your music career - and what can listeners expect next from you?



There is so much that I want to say through my songs. I will continue to write songs, make music videos, shaping my own identity as an artist in music. I am currently in Cape Town but going back to Potchefstroom I will continue to do gigs with Self-Direction.



“I am not sure what the future holds for me as an artist but the one thing that I am sure of is that I am never going to stop singing.”



Gibson

LPTRM00-15

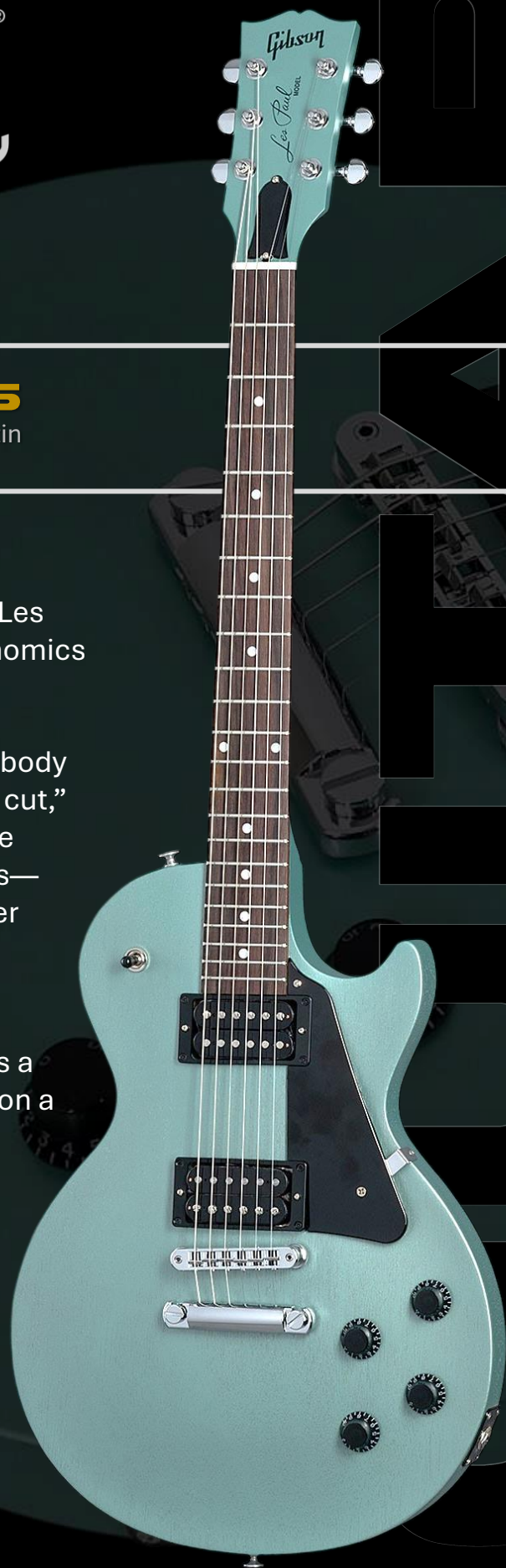
Les Paul Modern Lite Inverness Green Satin

The Gibson Les Paul Modern Lite in Inverness Green Satin blends classic Les Paul aesthetics with lightweight ergonomics and modern design cues.

This model features an all-mahogany body with a thinner profile and a rear “belly cut,” making it significantly lighter and more comfortable than traditional Les Pauls—typically the lightest solid-body LP ever built.

A satin nitrocellulose lacquer finish highlights the wood grain and includes a matching headstock for the first time on a Core Les Paul model.

**A Guitarist's Perspective a
Lightweight Powerhouse,
No Fluff.**



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

From the guitarist's perspective, this instrument offers all the core tonal and performance elements of a Les Paul—sustain, growl, and clarity—without the heft and effect-laden aesthetics. The thin, contoured body and satin finish make it easy to handle for long sessions.

The SlimTaper neck encourages fast movement and expression, while the PAF-inspired pickups deliver raw, dynamic tones. It's a "gigging partner" rather than a fragile collector piece—lean, mean, and ready to burn.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

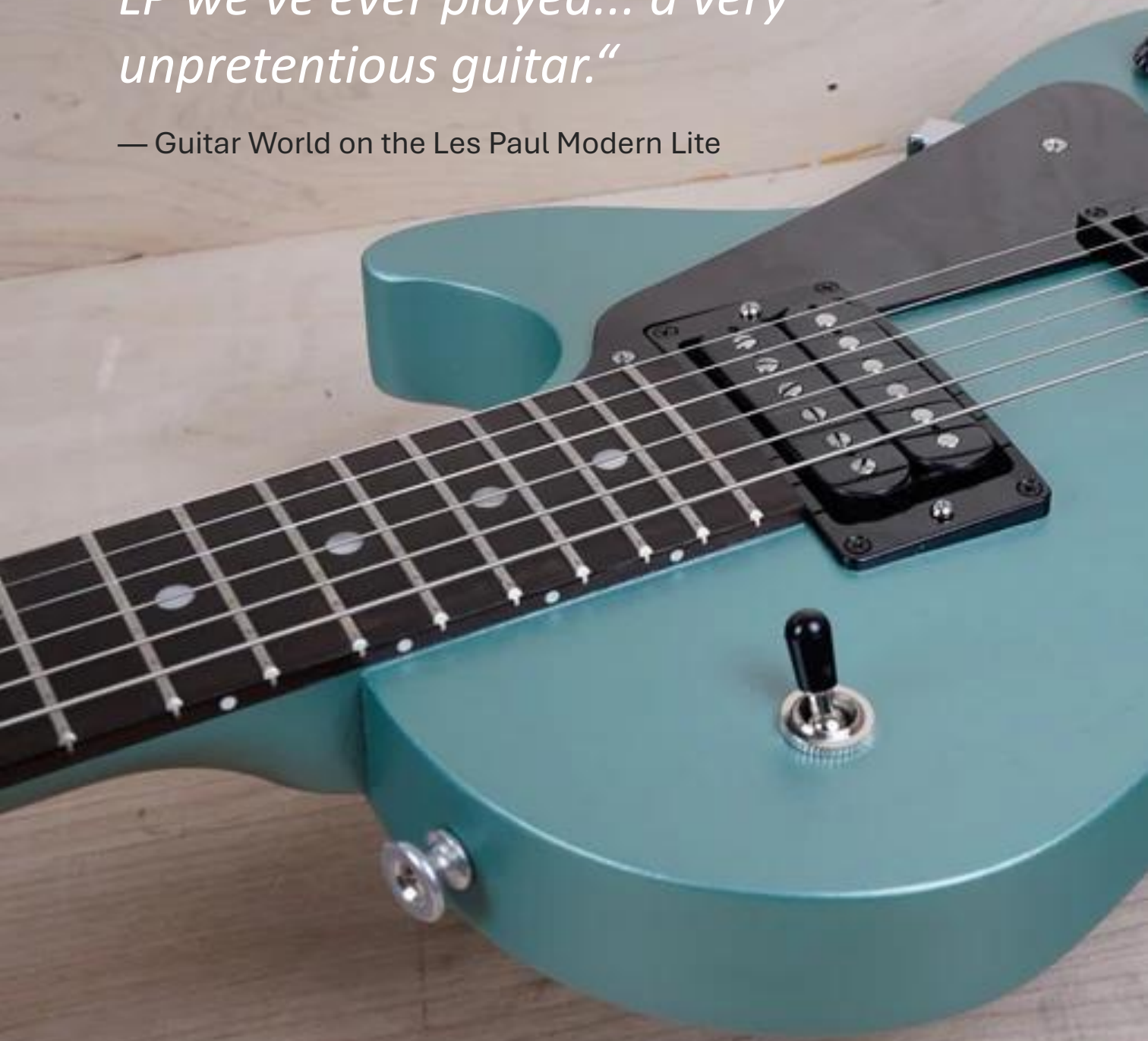
The Les Paul Modern Lite excels in genre flexibility:

- **Rock & Hard Rock:** The hot 498T bridge humbucker delivers tight, aggressive tones ideal for overdrive and distortion.
- **Blues & Classic Rock:** The more balanced 490R neck pickup provides warm, smooth tones full of midrange charm.
- **Modern, High-Energy Styles:** Its lightweight design allows for comfort during energetic performances or complex riffing—ideal for extended play.
- **Studio & Practice:** Straightforward controls and reliable tuning hardware make it well-suited for session work and at-home creativity.



"This is the lightest solidbody LP we've ever played... a very unpretentious guitar."

— Guitar World on the Les Paul Modern Lite





WHO WOULD USE IT?

Ideal for:

- **Gigging Guitarists** needing a dependable, lightweight Les Paul that's comfortable on stage and in transport.
- **Players Prizing Playability Over Flash**—those who value tone and ease of play more than fancy looks.
- Blues, Rock, Metal Players looking for an expressive yet agile instrument with raw punch and sustain.
- **Studio Musicians** requiring a versatile, reliable tool that cuts weight without compromising classic Les Paul tonality.
- **Anyone Sidelined by Heavier Les Pauls**—this model brings back the iconic sound in a leaner, smoother guise.

Improvisation, Intention, and Growth.

The Evolving Sound of Keenan Ahrends

Artist

Keenan Ahrends is a guitarist whose playing carries both depth and subtle

fire. Rooted in South Africa's rich jazz heritage yet shaped by international study and collaboration, his music reflects a journey of exploration—one that balances emotive improvisation with meticulous compositional craft.

In this interview, Keenan opens up about his beginnings in Cape Town, the lessons he's drawn from studying and performing across three continents, and how collaborations with legendary artists continue to shape his voice. His story is one of perseverance, curiosity, and a devotion to music as both personal expression and cultural dialogue.

Image Credit: Jonothan Rees



Image Credit: Lindo Mbhele



Image Credit: Noncedo Charmaine Mathibela



Image Credit: Lindo Mbhele



Image Credit: Stefan Wolf

MG You've studied in South Africa, Norway, and more recently completed your Master's at Stellenbosch. How have these different environments and mentors influenced your sound and approach to music?

MG For those who may be discovering your work for the first time, who is Keenan Ahrends, and how did your journey as a jazz guitarist and composer begin?



I started playing guitar at 14 in Cape Town, where I'm originally from. My dad showed me a few chords, and from there I taught myself until I was 17, when I began lessons with jazz guitarist Wayne Bosch. Later, I studied music formally, including an exchange in Norway.

My first big experience was playing in a youth band called Little Giants around 2005. By 2006/2007, professional players were booking me, and that's when my career really started taking shape.



Studying at UCT exposed me to the jazz language and gave me opportunities to jam, perform, and grow by playing with other musicians. Norway was a culture shock because the focus there was on freely improvised music rather than traditional jazz, which broadened my perspective.

My early foundation with Wayne Bosch was crucial, and at Stellenbosch my Master's was more academic, which deepened my theoretical and analytical skills. Each environment added something unique that shaped my musical language.

MG Your Master's research explored the compositional processes of contemporary South African jazz musicians alongside your own. What key insights or lessons stood out to you during that process?



It was fascinating to learn how different musicians approach composition - whether through rhythm, melody, technology, or other tools. Some of the people I interviewed I also play with and admire, so hearing their processes was inspiring. Reflecting on their methods helped me understand my own compositional approach better and incorporate new tools into my writing. It showed me that while composition can feel magical, there are also concrete processes behind it.

MG You've performed with an incredible range of artists, from Louis Moholo to SOMI. How have these collaborations shaped your own playing and creative outlook?



Playing with others is one of the most important ways I've grown. Every collaboration brings something new. Performing with Louis Moholo taught me a lot about spontaneity and free improvisation. Playing Somi's music required adapting to her unique compositional ideas. Working with musicians like my late colleague, whose playing was full of intention and intensity, pushed me to approach my own music with greater focus and purpose. Each collaboration adds to my musical voice.



MG Your albums **Narrative** and **Perseverance** each have distinct energies. How would you describe your artistic evolution between these two projects?



Narrative reflects who I was as a younger musician - it captures what I was listening to and exploring at the time. With Perseverance, I started writing more long-form compositions and experimenting with modern jazz influences. Over time, my process has become more detailed and complex. These days, I'm particularly interested in through-composed writing, which continues to push my evolution as a composer.

MG You've written both for your trio and for larger ensembles like the Cape Town **Ghoema Orchestra**. How does your writing process adapt between intimate and large-scale compositions?



When I first wrote for the Cape Town Ghoema Orchestra at 25, it was a big learning curve. I used Sibelius, my guitar, and voice to develop ideas, figuring out how to expand them across multiple instruments.

In a trio, things are simpler—melody, chords, groove, and reacting in the moment. With larger groups, you can flesh ideas out more, harmonize differently, and distribute musical roles across instruments. I never studied composition formally, so I'm still learning a lot through the process itself.

MG You're known for playing **Gibson** guitars. What draws you to this brand, and how does it shape your tone and overall sound?



I grew up seeing older jazz musicians play Gibsons and always admired them. When I played Alvin Dyers' 1948 ES-175, I fell in love with the sound. I now play a 1956 ES-175, which has a beautiful woody tone, perfect for acoustic jazz.

I also have a 1969 ES-335, which cuts through well in different genres and has a modern edge with a slightly smaller neck that makes it easy to play. For me, it's really the vintage Gibsons that capture the sound and feel I love.

MG Looking ahead, what's next for you - musically, creatively, or personally - in the coming months?



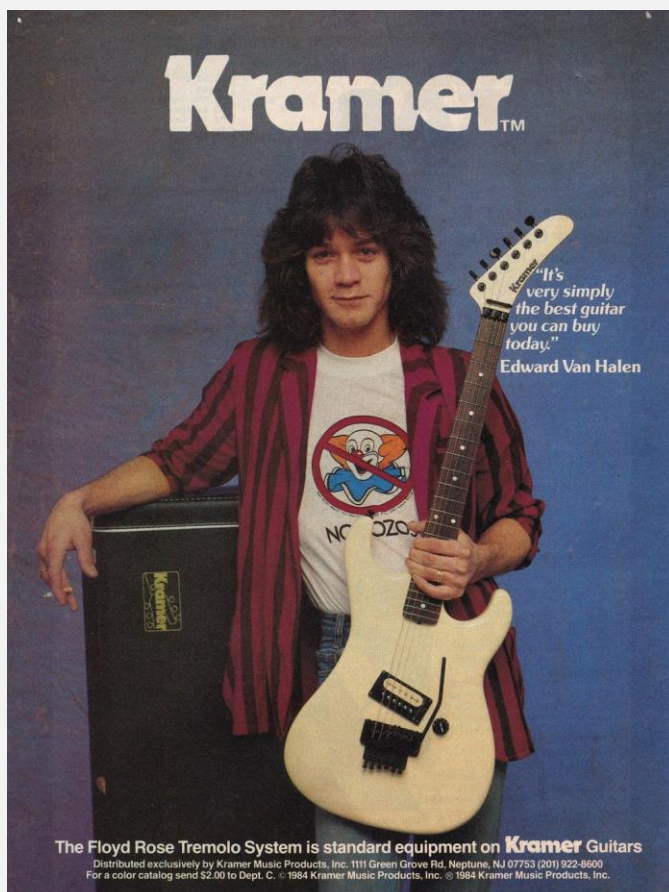
I'm currently expanding compositionally, preparing music for a septet performance in September and a trio performance in October. Early next year I might head to the U.S., so I'm focused on practicing, composing, and growing as a musician. Beyond that, I try to approach whatever life brings by staying kind and continually working on being a better person.

“To me, composition can feel magical, but I’ve learned there are also concrete processes behind it. Every collaboration, every environment adds something unique that shapes my musical language.”

— Keenan Ahrends



The Return of an '80s Shred Legend



Few guitar brands embody the raw energy and excess of the 1980s like Kramer. With their flashy designs, lightning-fast playability, and association with some of the era's most iconic rock gods, Kramer guitars became the definitive shred machines of the glam metal movement.

Now, after decades of silence, they've roared back to life—honouring their wild heritage while bringing modern upgrades to a new generation of players.

The Kramer story began in the late 1970s, but by the mid-'80s the brand was everywhere. Their meteoric rise was fuelled in no small part by Eddie Van Halen, who famously strapped on a Kramer at the height of his career. His endorsement cemented Kramer as the number-one selling guitar brand in America.

With neon finishes, sharp contours, and the revolutionary Floyd Rose double-locking tremolo system, Kramer guitars were as bold visually as they were sonically. Players could dive-bomb and bend with abandon, all while staying perfectly in tune—something that changed the game for shredders forever.

Everything about Kramer guitars screamed speed and spectacle. Their slim, fast necks made blazing solos feel effortless, while hot-rodded pickups delivered high-output tones that cut through the chaos of massive rock stages.

They weren't just instruments—they were statements, perfectly aligned with the loud, flamboyant spirit of the '80s.

For many players, strapping on a Kramer meant stepping into the role of a larger-than-life rock hero.



But while the glam era faded, Kramer never truly died. After years of dormancy, the brand has made a triumphant return, reviving classics like the Baretta, Pacer, and SM-1.

These modern iterations stay true to the originals in style and attitude but feature contemporary refinements: upgraded electronics, sleeker neck profiles, and finishes that balance vintage nostalgia with modern edge.

While still designed for speed and aggression, today's Kramers have broadened their reach, finding homes in hard rock, metal, alternative, and beyond.

For guitarists, Kramer represents more than just nostalgia—it's a bridge between eras. Its heritage ties players directly to one of the most iconic periods in guitar history, while its performance remains built for precision and power. **The bold looks still turn heads on stage, and the versatile tones ensure these guitars aren't confined to a single genre.**

Younger players are now rediscovering Kramer through social media, reissues, and artist collaborations, while seasoned guitarists in South Africa and abroad are welcoming their return with open arms.



Kramer guitars stand as loud, unapologetic reminders of a time when rock ruled the world—but they're also proof that true innovation doesn't age. With their mix of heritage and modern playability, they continue to inspire players who want their instrument to feel as wild as their sound.





KASF-MGP

Assault Figured Magenta Perimeter

The Kramer Assault Figured — Magenta Perimeter is a visually striking single-cut guitar that merges vintage single-cut styling with shred-ready modern construction. It features a mahogany body crowned with a AAA flame maple veneer, delivering both rich tonal warmth and breathtaking visual depth.

The neck is a three-piece thermally aged maple with the ultra-fast K-Speed SlimTaper C profile, set into the body for resonance and stability, riding a comfortable 25.5-inch scale. Topped off with an ebony fretboard sporting a 12.6" radius, 24 jumbo frets, and Pearloid Diamond Eye inlays, it's built for serious speed and precision.

**A Shred-Ready Single-Cut
with Flair**




WHY IT'S WORTH IT

From a guitarist's viewpoint, the Assault Figured stands out as a single-cut guitar infused with modern performance demands. The 25.5" scale offers tighter string tension and articulate tone, unlike traditional shorter-scale Les Pauls. Its fast K-Speed SlimTaper C neck combined with the 24 jumbo frets and ebony fingerboard make it ideal for high-velocity runs and technical work.

The Eruption pickups, designed by master luthier Jim DeCola, serve up searing output with clarity and "brown-sound" character—perfect for modern rock and metal. And with the Floyd Rose trem, you get dive-bombs and vibrato extremes—all while staying in tune—a essential for stage-shredders.


WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

- **Hard Rock / Metal / Shred:** High-output pickups and a locking tremolo make it primed for heavy riffing and soaring lead work.
- **Modern Progressive Styles:** Precision and articulation make it great for complex rhythms and fast melodic phrases.
- **Fusion / Technical Instrumental:** Fast neck and wide tonal range work well for genres demanding both clarity and aggression.
- **Hard-Hitting Blues-Rock:** Cranked humbuckers with stay-in-tune hardware offer sustain and expressive dynamics even in blues contexts.



*“The pickups ... work
absolutely perfect for blues,
jazz, country on clean or
distorted—but also can
create some pure magical
metal and rock sounds.”*

— Adam- Assault Figured Player



WHO WOULD USE IT?

Perfect for:

- **Shred and Metal Players** requiring speed, precision, and reliable trem performance.
- **Technical Rockers and Fusion Artists** who need a guitar that can nail fast passages cleanly and comfortably.
- **Modern Rock Musicians** wanting aggressive tone with vintage single-cut aesthetics.
- **Stage Performers** needing tuning stability and eye-catching looks (that magenta burst top doesn't go unnoticed).
- **Versatile Players** who span genres from clean blues to distorted riffing and want one guitar to cover it all.

SMALL SIZE, BIG SOUND

Debut **BASS**

DEBUT BASS 25



DEBUT BASS 15



When it comes to bass amps, it's not always about shaking the windows or rattling the neighbour's walls. Sometimes what you need is something compact, affordable, and reliable—without losing that all-important tone. That's exactly what Blackstar has done with their **Debut BASS series**, and it's a breath of fresh air for South African bassists.

The Debut BASS amps come in two sizes: a 15-watt version with a 6.5-inch speaker, and a 25-watt version with an 8-inch speaker.



Both are solid-state combos that are as straightforward as they are effective. You get a simple volume knob and a 3-band EQ—low, mid, and high—that give you complete control over your tone. Add in a drive channel, and suddenly you've got the grit and growl you need for heavier styles like punk, rock, or anything that demands a bit more bite.



For practice, these amps tick all the right boxes. Plug in your headphones, and you can go at it for hours without disturbing anyone around you. There's also a line input, which means you can jam along with your favourite tracks, YouTube lessons, or even backing tracks when you're prepping for a gig.

What really stands out is how practical they are. They're light, compact, and built tough enough to handle being moved from rehearsal to rehearsal. For beginners, they're the perfect first bass amp—simple to use, forgiving, and surprisingly powerful for their size. For working musicians, they make an excellent practice or grab-and-go amp when you don't want to haul a full rig around.



The **15B** is ideal if you're just starting out or need a compact option for home practice, while the **25B** gives you that extra bit of punch and a larger speaker, making it better suited for small jam sessions or rehearsal spaces. Both carry the Blackstar badge of quality, which has become trusted by guitarists and bassists worldwide.

Here in South Africa, where gear can be pricey and choice sometimes limited, it's refreshing to see amps that are both affordable and genuinely useful.



The Blackstar Debut BASS series proves that you don't need to spend a fortune to get solid tone, practical features, and a piece of gear that grows with you as a player.

Big sound in small packages—that's the Debut BASS promise.



THE ULTIMATE BASS PRACTICE AMPS

Epiphone

EFCL-EB

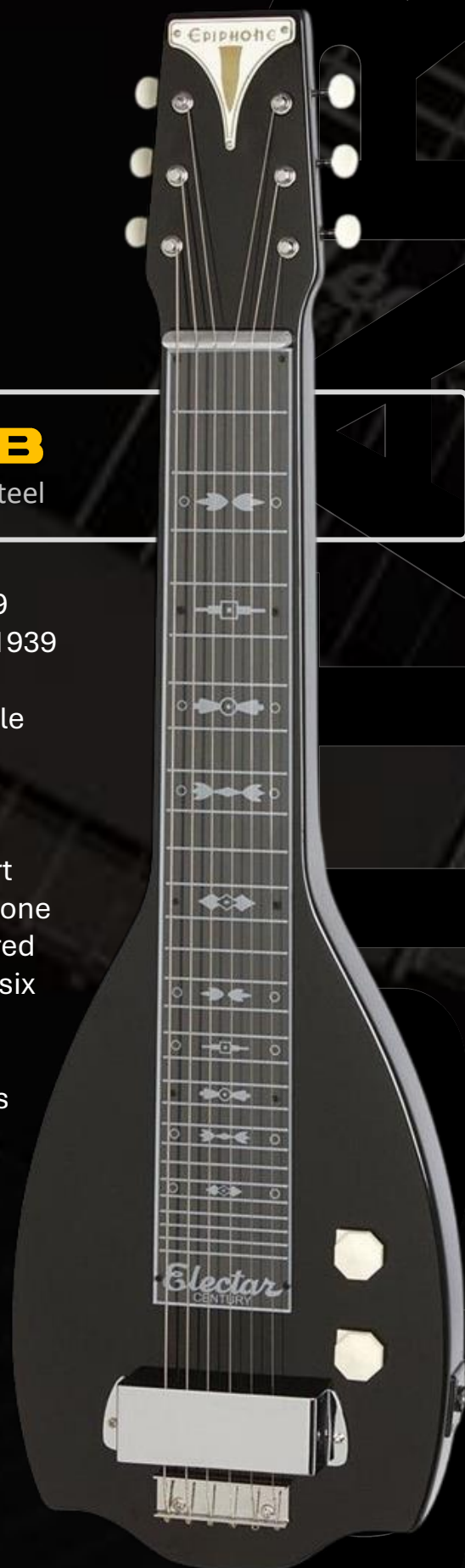
Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel

The Epiphone EFCL-EB Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel is a faithful reissue of Epiphone's 1939 classic, designed to capture the vintage character of the original while offering reliable modern performance.

It features an all-mahogany body and neck, topped with a Plexiglass fingerboard in an Art Deco replica design. At its heart is the Epiphone 500B "Blade" humbucker, a pickup engineered to deliver smooth, even response across all six strings—perfect for slide technique.

The non-slip rubber pad on the back ensures stability when played seated, while period-correct appointments like the "Circus Tent" knobs and vintage Epiphone headstock badge reinforce its throwback aesthetic.

**A Guitarist's Perspective
on a Vintage Voice for
Modern Players**



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

What makes the Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel so appealing is its balance of authenticity and usability. For players chasing the classic tones of early country, blues, and Hawaiian lap steel, this reissue offers a direct connection to that era without the maintenance issues of a true vintage instrument.

The blade humbucker pickup avoids string-to-string imbalance common in pole-piece pickups, ensuring a fuller, more consistent sound. Add in its solid mahogany construction and sleek Art Deco looks, and it becomes a lap steel that not only sounds great but also looks like a piece of history on stage—all while remaining very reasonably priced compared to boutique lap steels.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

The Electar Century 1939 Lap Steel excels in genres that benefit from expressive slide playing and rich sustain, including:


- **Blues** – Warm, vocal-like tones for soulful slide work.
- **Country & Western Swing** – Perfect for smooth bends, pedal steel-style licks, and classic lap steel textures.
- **Hawaiian Music** – Its rounded, singing sustain makes it ideal for traditional Hawaiian lap steel.
- **Rock & Americana** – Adds vintage-flavored color and slide textures to modern roots music.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

Perfect for:

- **Slide Guitar Beginners** – Easy entry into lap steel with vintage-inspired design.
- **Blues & Country Players** – Looking for warm, expressive tones.
- **Vintage Gear Enthusiasts** – Wanting the look and feel of a '30s lap steel without hunting for originals.
- **Studio Musicians** – Adding authentic lap steel textures to recordings.
- **Live Performers** – Reliable, lightweight, and eye-catching on stage.



“The pickup is excellent, nice and fat with a lot of sustain. For the price, it’s hard to beat this lap steel—it nails that vintage sound.”

– Proud Electar Century 199 Lap Steel Owner

Rock

PARKEETOWN NORTH





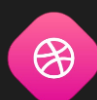
SCHOOL of ROCK[®]

PARKTOWN NORTH

Situated in the heart of Johannesburg, School of Rock Parktown North is the latest addition to South Africa's growing rock-based music education movement. Opened in November 2024, this dynamic school offers a performance-driven approach to learning—empowering students of all ages to master instruments, vocals, and stagecraft through real band experiences.

From young beginners in the *Little Wing* program to teens in *Performance* groups and adults in *AllStars*, students learn by doing—rehearsing and performing in live shows that build confidence, creativity, and musical skill.

With expert instructors, a vibrant musical community, and a passion for rock at its core, School of Rock Parktown North is where future musicians come to find their sound and shine on stage.



A Voice That Won't Be Silenced

Akeelah is a young vocalist whose passion for singing has been with her for as long as she can remember. She began performing at just eight years old, and while piano once played a role in her journey, her voice has always been her truest instrument.

Inspired by artists like Rihanna and Tyla, Akeelah admires their confidence, artistry, and success—qualities she brings into her own performances. As she heads to Comic Con, she's not only excited to perform but also to soak in the vibrant atmosphere, celebrating music, creativity, and cosplay alongside the crowd.





What instrument do you play?

I currently only sing and do vocals. I used to do piano, but covid hit and I lost my motivation for piano, but never for vocals. I've been singing for as long as I can remember, but I only started performing when I was only 8 years old.

Who is your favourite artist?

I loveeeee Rihanna. Whenever my parents played her albums in the car, I'd be singing to myself in the backseat. She inspired me to realise how much I love music and singing. I also love Tyla. I love the confidence they both radiate whenever they perform, I love their music, and their success is inspiring to me.

What are you most looking forward to at Comic Con?

Seeing people in cosplays of their favourite characters. Comic con is a big event that I've always wanted to go to. It's an event where people can be themselves and dress up as their favourite characters and have fun without people judging them! I'm excited for the audience, I'm excited to just even be there."

Young, Loud, and Ready to Play

Max is a young guitarist with a passion for the electric guitar—both its sound and its striking designs. Inspired by Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore, Max blends alternative influences with his own style, often jamming on favourites like Green Day's When I Come Around.

With Comic Con on the horizon, he's buzzing with excitement at the chance to perform live in front of a massive crowd for the very first time.





What instrument do you play?

I play the electric guitar. I love everything about it, from the sound to the incredible designs.

Who is your favourite artist?

My favourite artist is Thurston Moore, the lead guitarist from Sonic Youth.

What is your favourite song to play on your guitar?

I love playing "When I Come Around" by Green Day.

What are you most looking forward to at Comic Con?

I can't wait to play live at such a huge event! It's going to be awesome to play in front of so many people.

Rock Roots, Big Dreams

Jake is a guitarist with a love for both electric and acoustic sounds, drawing inspiration from rock legends like Led Zeppelin. Known for tackling ambitious pieces such as Andy Timmons' finger-style arrangement of Bohemian Rhapsody, Jake thrives on the challenge of translating music into something truly his own.

With Comic Con ahead, he's most excited to step onto the big stage, sharing the music he loves and experiencing the thrill of connecting with a live crowd.





What instrument do you play?

I play electric and acoustic guitar.

Who is your favourite artist?

Difficult to say but probably Led Zeppelin.

What is your favourite song to play on your guitar?

Finger-style arrangement of bohemian rhapsody for guitar by Andy Timmons.

What are you most looking forward to at Comic Con?

Playing in front of a big crowd and getting to experience that special feeling when performing the music I love.

Epiphone

ETWF-BW

George Thorogood “White Fang” ES-125TDC

The Epiphone George Thorogood “White Fang” ES-125TDC is a limited-edition, hollow-body archtop electric guitar built in the spirit of Thorogood's vintage Gibson ES-125.

Sporting a layered maple body with cream binding and a striking Bone White gloss finish, it's adorned with a removable “Cobra” sticker, replicating the mark on Thorogood's own guitar. The neck is mahogany with Thorogood's exclusive White Fang profile and a glued-in set joint, topped with a Pau Ferro fingerboard featuring a 12" radius and 20 medium frets.

It's powered by dual P-90 PRO™ single-coil pickups, controlled via separate volume and tone knobs and a 3-way toggle switch.

A Guitarist's Perspective
Pure Blues Attitude Meets
Vintage Soul.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

George Thorogood sums it up best:

"My new Epiphones are like riding a thoroughbred horse—you have to hold them back... I can't wait to get to the gig."

From a guitarist's viewpoint, the White Fang isn't just a replica—it's built to perform. The hollow-body construction brings that acoustic-like feel with electric response, while the P-90 PRO pickups deliver the gritty, biting tone that made Thorogood's sound iconic.

The White Fang profile neck offers comfortable playability that encourages expressiveness, letting players unleash their blues chops naturally. And the Bone White finish and snake-handle case? That's just the icing on a rugged, blues-ready instrument.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

This guitar shines in styles where tone and vibe matter most:

- **Boogie-Blues & Classic Rock:** P-90 PRO pickups deliver raw, punchy, and articulate tone—the sound of gritty slide blues and rock swagger.
- **Roots & Americana:** The hollow-body offers warm resonance well-suited for unplugged exploration or reverby amps.
- **Rockabilly, R&B, and Country:** The neck and midrange bite give clarity and character to rhythm strumming or mellow lead licks.
- **Live Performance Essentials:** With rock-solid hardware and vibe for days, this guitar is built to carry you through high-energy gigs.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

Perfect for:

- **Blues-Rock Frontmen and Lead Players** craving gritty, expressive tone with vintage flavor.
- **Slide Guitar Enthusiasts** drawn to the hollow-body personality with P-90 growl.
- **Collectors Seeking Heritage with Edge** who appreciate artist-inspired details and signature elements.
- **Stage Performers** wanting a guitar that balances dramatic visuals with reliable performance.
- **Session Musicians** needing a versatile, standout guitar for recording authentic roots and blues tracks.



“My original 125 and P-90s was a good blend—the tone was nasty and different... but the pickups weren’t that powerful... the P-90 PROs have a great combination of tone and power, which is the best of both worlds.”

— George Thorogood, on his White Fang model



★ AMPED



A WHOLE RIG AT YOUR FEET

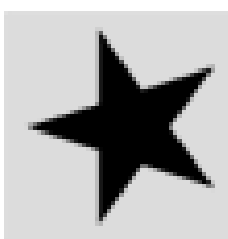
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A



Every guitarist dreams of a setup that delivers huge tone, total control, and easy portability. Blackstar's **AMPED 2** makes that dream a reality by putting an entire amp and pedalboard rig into a single, compact floor unit.



On stage, the AMPED 2 feels like a game-changer. It's a **100-watt pedalboard amp** that can power a cabinet, feed a PA, or go straight into an interface for recording. With three amp voicings, onboard modulation, delay, and reverb, plus drive and boost circuits, it gives you everything from sparkling cleans to crushing high-gain sounds without needing a separate head and pedals.

What stands out is how natural it feels under the fingers. The response is dynamic and tube-like, giving you that familiar push and sag guitarists crave. For gigging players in South Africa, it means showing up with just a guitar, the AMPED 2, and maybe a cab—and you're ready for any stage. No more hauling heavy rigs or worrying about backline gear. The connectivity also makes it future-proof.

SPEAKER SIMULATOR AND DIRECT OUTPUTS

Fine-tune your cabinet, mic, and room simulations with our CabRig technology and output via XLR or stereo jack. Alternatively, connect via USB for effortlessly simple recording to your DAW without the need for an interface.

USB audio for recording, balanced outputs with cabinet simulation for silent gigs, and MIDI control for those who like to integrate it into bigger setups.

It's built for the modern guitarist who wants maximum flexibility without sacrificing tone.





100W Amp + FX in a Compact Pedal

AMPED 2 is a 100 Watt pedal power amplifier with drive pedals in the front end, and an advanced effects processor, capable of delivering the tone and feel of traditional valve amps. You can use it in the front end of a traditional amp, power a cabinet at 100 Watts or go direct, ensuring you can take your sound with you anywhere. Power reduction down to 1W and USB-C connectivity means it's equally at home in the studio or the stage.

High Headroom Power Amp Design

The power amplifier's unique, high-headroom design does not compromise on output even at 16 Ohms. Get maximum power and optimum tone with any cabinet set-up at 8 or 16 Ohms. Blackstar's patented Response control offers distinctly different and authentic power valve responses and guitar amp dynamics.

Advanced Effects Processor

Four studio quality, fully configurable, built-in effects pedals (Drive, Modulation, Delay and Reverb) provides unparalleled versatility.

For players looking to cut down their rig while stepping up their sound, this is one piece of kit that proves big tone doesn't have to come in a big box.

STEINBERGERTM

**The
Innovative
Shape
That
Changed
Guitar
Design
Forever**



When it comes to guitar innovation, few instruments have made as bold and lasting an impact as the Steinberger. Instantly recognizable for its radical headless design, compact body, and futuristic appeal, it first appeared in the 1980s and immediately challenged everything guitarists thought they knew about their instrument. Even today, Steinberger continues to shape how modern guitars are designed and built.

The story begins with Ned Steinberger in the late 1970s.

While the world was filled with Stratocasters and Les Pauls, Steinberger envisioned something different—an instrument stripped down to its purest form, using advanced materials like carbon fibre and aluminium instead of traditional woods.

By removing the headstock entirely, he not only created a striking silhouette but also solved age-old tuning problems. His patented double-ball string system made string changes faster and kept the guitar rock-solid in tune, no matter how aggressively it was played or how far it travelled.



But Steinberger wasn't just about looks and practicality. The lightweight construction made it ultra-portable, while its compact, ergonomic shape offered unmatched comfort for long sessions and late-night gigs. Guitarists found themselves free to focus on their playing without wrestling with the instrument. At the same time, the unique use of carbon and graphite enhanced sustain, durability, and tonal clarity.

Tonally, Steinberger guitars developed their own voice. Known for a bright, articulate sound and smooth sustain, they became favourites in genres that demanded precision and versatility—jazz fusion, progressive rock, and new wave. Icons like Eddie Van Halen and Pat Metheny put Steinberger on stages and records, proving that innovation could hold its own in the company of classics.

Though Steinberger instruments became highly collectible and rare for a time, they are once again being produced with the same revolutionary spirit.





Today's models blend the original headless ethos with modern upgrades like active pickups, improved hardware, and contemporary finishes. They remain as striking as ever, appealing to collectors, professionals, and everyday players alike.

For South African guitarists, Steinberger represents both opportunity and individuality. Its compact size is perfect for musicians on the move, whether playing small local venues or travelling long distances for gigs.

Its versatile sound adapts easily across musical styles, while its futuristic look sets a player apart visually. With local distributors beginning to reintroduce Steinberger models into the market, now is the perfect time to experience the instrument that redefined guitar design.

Steinberger guitars didn't just change how guitars looked—they changed how they functioned, how they sounded, and how they fit into a musician's life.

More than forty years after Ned Steinberger's first bold designs, they remain a symbol of fearless innovation and engineering genius.



Where Gospel Meets Jazz and Soul

Ntsiki Ntsele

Ntsiki Ntsele's

journey from the small township of Esikhawini in KwaZulu-Natal to some of South Africa's biggest stages is a story of faith, resilience, and passion.

Rooted in gospel and nurtured in his father's church, Ntsiki taught himself to play piano and gradually grew into one of the country's most versatile musicians.

Today, his sound blends gospel, soul, jazz, and pop into a style that is as spiritually grounded as it is musically adventurous.

In this interview, he reflects on his beginnings, the lessons learned through collaboration with major artists, and his vision for inspiring audiences both locally and abroad.



You're an incredibly talented pianist whose sound blends Gospel, Soul, Jazz, and Pop. For those who are just discovering your work - who is Ntsiki Ntsele, and how did your musical journey begin in Empangeni?



Ntsiki Ntsele is a pianist from Esikhawini in KwaZulu-Natal. I grew up in a Christ centered household with both parents as pastors and faith has always been central to my life. God is the foundation of everything I do and that shows in where my musical journey began.



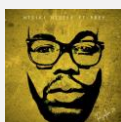
You started playing piano at your father's church at a young age. How did those early experiences influence your musical foundation and passion?



My earliest experiences with music began at my father's church where I started learning to play piano at a young age. It was not an easy path as there wasn't much formal guidance so I had figure out most things on my own. This taught me resilience and patience and also forced me to develop my ear. Looking back I realize that the challenges I faced helped me form a strong foundation which was mostly driven by my passion for music.



You studied Popular Music at Central Johannesburg College - how has formal education shaped your approach to performance and collaboration?



Studying music has helped me quite a lot. It deepened my understanding of my

instrument, gave me a solid grasp of music theory and exposed me to different approaches in performance and collaborating with others.

It also opened my eyes to the business side of the industry which is something every musician needs to navigate if they want to sustain a career and this is invaluable knowledge I wouldn't have received had I not studied music.



You've worked with major names like Kelly Khumalo, Afrotrraction, Unathi, and Kabomo. Which collaboration has challenged or inspired you the most, and why?



I have been fortunate enough to work with incredible artists such as Kelly Khumalo,

Afrotrraction, Unathi and Kabomo. Working with each of these artists brought something unique to my journey but I'd say working with Afrotrraction really pushed me to grow technically and musically.

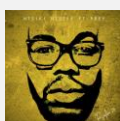




His precision and artistry was really inspiring. On the other hand, working with Kabomo influenced my creativity and helped me refine my sound. Both experiences shaped me in different ways but in equally important ways.



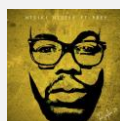
Your sound blends multiple genres seamlessly. How do you approach genre fusion in your compositions and live sets?



I've always loved exploring different styles of music. I mostly gravitate towards blending gospel, jazz and neo-soul. Gospel gives me the spiritual depth while jazz adds a bit of improvisation and freedom and neo-soul brings a modern and soulful texture. For me fusing genres makes the music feel more authentic and natural rather than forced.



You're often seen performing with a Nord keyboard. What do you enjoy most about the Nord, and how does it support your style and versatility on stage?



The Nord Keyboards have become a big part of my sound and creative process. What I love most about them is the quality of the sounds. They are also very user friendly making it easy for me to adapt during live performances. On top of that, they are lightweight and are built to last which makes them perfect for gigging musicians like me.



You've performed across major stages and recorded with some incredible talents. What moments in your career stand out as milestones or turning points?



A major milestone in my career was performing during Idols SA Theatre Week. It was such a surreal experience knowing that I had gone from teaching myself piano in church to playing on such a prestigious stage.

That moment validated all the long hours and hard work that I had put into my craft. It also reminded me that opportunities come when you stay committed and ready. Performing there was both an honour and a motivation to keep pushing for even bigger goals.



Looking ahead, what's next for Ntsiki Ntsele - whether it's new music, collaborations, or international performances?



Looking ahead, I'm focusing on releasing more of my original music which blends my signature gospel, jazz and neo soul influences. I'm also planning exciting collaborations with amazing artists.

I'm also looking to perform internationally as I want to share my music with people beyond South Africa. Ultimately my vision is to inspire and keep evolving as a musician.



stage 4

TAKING THE STAGE with Red Confidence nord piano 6

There are instruments you play in a room, and then there are instruments you take onto a stage and trust with your whole performance. The Nord Piano 6 firmly belongs in the second category. From the moment you see that unmistakable red chassis under the stage lights, you know it's built for more than just practice—it's built to perform.



For many South African gigging musicians, a stage piano is often about compromise.

You want authentic acoustic tones but also the flexibility of layering, splits, and effects that can handle everything from a church service to a jazz festival, a theatre pit to a rock gig. The Nord Piano 6 doesn't feel like a compromise—it feels like the standard.

The first thing you notice on stage is how alive the acoustic piano sounds are. Nord has spent years refining their sample libraries, and the Piano 6 takes full advantage.

If you're playing delicate ballads where every note needs to shimmer with emotion, or hammering out big chords in a band mix, the response is immediate and natural. The weighted keybed is expressive, balancing that grand piano feel with the kind of sensitivity you need when dynamics matter most.

But where the Nord really shines live is in its workflow. On stage, no one wants to be scrolling through endless menus while the audience waits. The Piano 6 is intuitive. With real buttons, knobs, and switches, you can layer a Rhodes over a string pad, add reverb, or split the keyboard for left-hand bass and right-hand piano—all in seconds.



There's also the reliability factor.

Anyone who gigs in South Africa knows the fear of power surges, dodgy gear, or sudden technical hiccups. Nord pianos have earned a reputation for being rock-solid.

The Piano 6 is light enough to carry into venues but sturdy enough to withstand life on the road. That's worth its weight in gold when you're loading in and out of clubs, theatres, or outdoor festivals.

Then there's the presence. It's hard to explain, but when a Nord is on stage, it looks like it belongs there. The red finish is instantly iconic, and audiences notice it. For many, it has become a sign of quality—an unspoken guarantee that the music is in good hands.

For the gigging pianist, the Nord Piano 6 isn't just an instrument, it's a partner. It handles the pressure, adapts to the moment, and delivers sound that inspires confidence.

Whether you're holding down the groove in a band, accompanying a singer, or stepping out for a solo performance, this piano elevates the experience—for you and for the audience.

That kind of flexibility means you can adapt mid-song, responding to the vibe of the room and the band without breaking flow.



Taking the stage is always a leap of faith. With the Nord Piano 6, it feels more like a leap you're destined to land.

nord piano 6
VIRTUAL HAMMER ACTION TECHNOLOGY 73



WIRELESS FREEDOM for South African Guitarists

Swift Audio WS-50



For years,

guitarists here in South Africa have wrestled with the same problem: cables. They're either too short, too tangled, or they give up on you mid-gig. And while wireless systems have always been around, the good ones were usually priced so high that only top touring acts could afford them. That's where the Swiff Audio WS-50 changes the game.

The WS-50 is a compact wireless system designed for guitars and other instruments, and it feels like a breath of fresh air for local musicians. Plug it in, switch it on, and suddenly you're free to move.

No tripping over leads, no stressing about cable length—just pure playing. And the best part? It doesn't kill your tone. The sound is clean, responsive, and reliable, even when you're moving around on stage.





What really makes it interesting is that it runs on UHF, not the usual 2.4GHz that so many cheaper systems use. That means far less interference, which is important when you're playing in busy venues where Wi-Fi and Bluetooth signals are everywhere.

Musicians who've tried it overseas say it holds up incredibly well in live settings, and here at home, that stability is exactly what you want if you're taking your music seriously.



Price matters, especially in South Africa where gear costs can be brutal. The WS-50 comes in at a fraction of what you'd pay for the big-name wireless systems, but it still feels professional.

For young guitarists just breaking into the gigging scene, or for seasoned players who are tired of replacing patch cables every few months, it's a practical step up.

Imagine standing on stage at a local festival or playing a packed club in Joburg, Cape Town, or Durban, and being able to move wherever the music takes you without worrying about your cable giving way. That's the kind of freedom the Swiff Audio WS-50 offers. It's not just another gadget—it's a tool that fits perfectly into the lives of South African musicians, helping them focus less on gear problems and more on the music itself.

SWIFF
AUDIO

The music industry here has always been about making the most of what you have. **With the WS-50**, guitarists don't have to compromise. It's affordable, reliable, and ready to keep up with the demands of our stages—big or small.

**We salute the
Godfather of
Heavy Metal!**





Finished in Vintage Cherry, it captures the look, feel, and sound of the guitar that helped shape the birth of heavy metal.

Built with a mahogany body, P-90 pickups, and vintage-style appointments, this SG delivers the raw, snarling tone that powered Black Sabbath's heaviest riffs.

Every detail has been carefully recreated—even down to the reproduction “Monkey” sticker on the guitar.

A photograph of a red Epiphone SG Special guitar standing upright on a gravel surface. The guitar is a vibrant red with a black pickguard and two P-90 pickups. It has a mahogany body and a dark wood neck with white dot inlays. The background is a gravel surface with some dry leaves.

Epiphone Tony Iommi SG Special is a faithful re-creation of his legendary “Monkey” SG.

Thank You To Mi CASA

MG

Pioneer Dj

 **AlphaTheta**



audio-technica

dBTechnologies



MIDAS



SONANCE
BEYOND SOUND

 **Turbosound®**



ENOVA

TANNOY

LAB.GRUPPEN



SOUND TOWN

Blackstar®
AMPLIFICATION

Carry-on

Epiphone

Gibson®

KRAMER
Guitars

Proudly brought to you by

proaudio

Are you mixing with the right company?